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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR (White Russian SSR)

DATE DISTR. 10 Feb. 1950

SUBJECT Airfield and Parachute Center in Polotsk

NO. OF PAGES 2

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(LISTED BELOW)SUPPLEMENT
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1. About 50 Douglas planes and 20 biplanes were stationed at the airfield on the northwestern edge of POLOTSK (28°47'E/55°28'N), between the Dvina River and the road to DAUGAVPILS (26°31'E/55°52'N) in 1948 (see Annex). The planes were parked in the open. A fuel dump of 6 containers, the size of railroad tank cars, and 8 to 10 smaller containers was on the edge of the field.
2. A parachute training center seemed to be located in the area of POLOTSK. Intensive parachute training was conducted in the area of BARAVUKHA (28°35'E/55°35' N). The parachutists wore leather helmets and a belt with a device for fastening the parachutes. Parachuting was done in good weather. At first, jumping was performed from a captive balloon, six men jumping at a time. Later, the jumping was done from twin-engine Douglas planes flying at an altitude of ~60 feet. Three or four planes flew close together. The parachutists jumped without weapons and were picked up by trucks.
3. Three large barracks were located in the area of BARAVUKHA, which, according to a Soviet soldier, were occupied by 30,000 parachutists.

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4. Parachute units were quartered in several barracks in POLOTSK. The parachutists wore special leather helmets and had submachine guns. Jumping was first performed from captive balloons, later from aircraft flying at an altitude of about 5,000 feet. The jumps were observed between 4 and 5 a.m. and 7 and 8 p.m. The parachutes were white. Three to four thousand men were quartered

Document No. 910	CLASSIFICATION SECRET /CONTROL-US OFFICIALS ONLY
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Class. Changed To: TS S C	letter of 16 October 1978 from the
Auth: WH 70-2	Director of Central Intelligence to the
Date: 10 Feb 1950	Archivist of the United States.
Approved For Release 2002/08/07 : CIA-RDP82-00457R004300300010-4	Review Date: 2008

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in one barracks. A dwelling house was under construction for the commanding general of the parachute troops; other dwellings were being built for a colonel and a lieutenant colonel.

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5. Intensive parachute training was observed around POLOTSK. Jumping was done all day from captive balloons and 10 to 15 Douglas twin-engine planes. A concentration of paratroopers was noted in POLOTSK. +

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Comment:

- a. The training of parachute units in the area of POLOTSK may be considered confirmed. The expansion of the airfield located northwest of the town was started by the German Air Force in 1942. A 3,300-foot runway was built, but hangars or brick buildings were not constructed.
- b. The area of BARAVUKHA, a Soviet troop training ground with many barracks, was heavily occupied by the German Third Armored Army during the war. Thirty thousand men could be quartered in this area. However, the reports do not make it certain whether or not the area is actually occupied to capacity.
- c. The observed strength and activities of the parachute units indicate the presence of a large parachute unit in addition to a large parachute school. The training conducted at this parachute center obviously ranges from primary training to combat training on a unit level.

1 Annex: Parachute Center in POLOTSK

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Note

25X1X All [] returned from the POLOTSK area confirmed the concentration of parachute units and intensive parachute training in this area.

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